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1932 George Washington Bicentennial

From the editorial page in the July 1931 *Needlecraft, the Magazine of Home Arts* published in Augusta, Maine.

"The George Washington Bicentennial. The year 1932 is to see probably the most stupendous celebration ever staged, in that it will be world-wide and will continue from February twenty-second until Thanksgiving Day. It is all in honor of the father of our country, George Washington, the two hundredth anniversary of whose birth occurs next year. The plan was first proposed to Congress in 1924, and approved on December second of that year, and the deep purpose of the celebration is 'that future generations of American citizens may live according to the example and precepts of Washington's exalted life and character and thus perpetuate the American Republic.' In these days, when we hear on all sides expressions of foreboding and fear as to the future of our nation, could anything be more timely or far-reaching than a celebration such as is planned? Surely it is bound to get us all into the very spirit which founded this, our country, under severely trying circumstances, quite as discouraging in their way perhaps as many of the conditions which exist today. The Bicentennial as it is planned cannot fail to constitute a true revival of the spirit which supported and encouraged Washington and his contemporaries as they worked and fought for the new nation they had set their hearts and ambitions upon building. We need that inspiration today as they did then, so let's all put our shoulders to the wheel and make of this a celebration which will literally be heard round the world.

"Already the actual plans for the Bicentennial are well under way. On February twenty-second next President Hoover will officially open the celebration by broadcasting from the Capitol an address upon the life of Washington. Following this the air from one end of the nation to the other will literally ring with the strains of 'America' played by the United States Marine Band, an organization which, by the way, existed as a fife and drum corps in Washington's time. It is expected that every American listening in will unite at that time in singing the national anthem as its strains come in over the radio. Isn't this truly a wonderful picture to contemplate? The American Tree Planting Association plans to have ten million 'Washington Trees' planted by cities, schools, churches, colleges, villages and fraternal organizations. All quarter dollar coins in 1932 will be official George Washington Memorial coins, bearing a profile portrait relief on one side. These are only a few of the many ambitious plans being put in motion through the effort of the Commission entrusted with the conduct of this coming celebration, but the members of the latter never fail to point out that it is the people in their individual capacity who can either make or mar this great celebration. The Commission can and has set the ball rolling, and it is now up to you and to me to do our utmost to make the principles upon which this American Republic was founded ring to a listening world. Let's put it across with plenty of vim and vigor.--A. M. S."

More citations will be added as I run across them again. This bicentennial celebration was a really big deal that year and received a lot of notice in the press and by various needlework editors. For example, see the Cherry Thieves Quilt by Winifred Avery elsewhere on this site that was probably inspired by the Washington bicentennial. The earliest edition of the *Colonial Quilts* catalog by Home Art Studios in Des Moines, Iowa, displays a George Washington / Mount Vernon Quilt on the back cover that was designed for the Washington Bicentennial. --Wilene Smith, December 30, 2013